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MEMORANDUM

To: Robin Madison
Legislative Services Agency

From: Robert Donley 

Subject: Graduation Rate

Date: November 4, 2013

You requested information for the Legislative Fiscal Committee on descriptions of the specific efforts underway at the Regents institutions to increase the four-year graduation rate. The Committee is also interested in the status of UNI's proposal to reduce non-resident tuition.

Please see attachment for the specific efforts underway to increase the four- year graduation rate. The concept of UNI's proposal to reduce non-resident tuition is still under study at the University level.

Please contact this office if you need additional information.

H:\BF\Legislative\2013 Session\responses\madison_graduationrates110413.doc

Attachment

cc: Legislative Liaisons
Legislative Log

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

University-Wide Efforts

Academic Support Services

- **SWAT:** free tutoring in gateway courses to increase success rates and student progress in their majors
- **Supplemental Instruction:** students enrolled in this program learn academic success skills specific to a shared course, but applicable to all classes. They learn study skills, time management, how to form effective study groups, how to be “in charge” of their education.
- **Midterm and Probation Outreach:** The Center for Diversity and Enrichment (CDE) contacts all affiliated students with midterm delinquency notices and students on probation to make sure they are getting connected to resources on campus and to offer our support as well.
- **Trio Student Support Services:** Trio is a federal grant project that serves students from low income, first generation families and students with disabilities.

Retention and Transition

- **MAPworks:** survey of first-year students to identify those at risk of failure and to provide support services to keep students in school
- **Living-Learning Communities:** Connecting students with peers and faculty who share common interests to ease students' transition
- **Onlowa:** Early immersion program for new first year and transfer students to assist in their transition to college
- **Early-Intervention Team:** Cross-functional group of academic and student affairs professionals who intervene with students struggling with personal, social, or academic issues
- **Transfer Transition:** this course for transfer students helps students acclimate to the University of Iowa and facilitates their transition.
- **Iowa Edge:** Iowa Edge provides opportunities for selected participants to acclimate to campus, build community, engage with faculty and staff and develop leadership skills.

Academic Planning

- **Summer Hawk Tuition Grant:** tuition scholarship to encourage students to stay on track to graduation
- **Four-year graduation plan:** with the exception of a few majors, all students are now automatically enrolled in this plan; students are guaranteed access to courses they need to graduate. Every department lays out the specific major courses needed each semester to stay on the four-year plan. University ensures availability of classes necessary for graduation
- **Mandatory advising** for first-year students: ensures that students are having on-going conversations (at least 2 times each semester) about their programs of study and progress towards four-year graduation.
- **Alternative Planning:** Advisors encourage parallel planning with students if they are interested in a competitive admission major, so that if they don't get into their desired program they are prepared to move on in a new major without interruption.

Collegiate Efforts

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

- **Professional Advising:** Connect students to the right major and to resources through professional advising
- **Alternative Planning:** Foster development of multiple pathways to careers in areas of student interest
 - Create alternative to Computer Science: Informatics added medical informatics and made other adjustments—CS completed.
 - Revitalize BA in Chemistry (designed by Chemistry) for students pursuing careers in the health sciences—will be approved for Fall 2014
 - Work on new major designed for pre health professionals, especially those taking the new MCAT (Biology doing this)—new, under development
 - Created new BA Exercise Science track in Health and Human Physiology (HHP) leading to certification, designed by HHP—completed
 - Created minor in Physical Activity and Nutrition Science, designed by HHP for all students interested in health and wellness—completed
 - Create Interdepartmental Studies Business Studies track as BA in partnership with Entrepreneur Center—includes capstone experience—in progress
- **Enhance Value-Added Academic Opportunities**
 - Create science writing courses, chemistry, biology, geoscience, geography—in progress
 - Create 1 semester hour off-cycle writing issues courses—in progress
- **Streamlined Policies:** Create academic standards to catch struggling students while removing unneeded policies
 - Implement new semester standard of GPA 1.50 beginning fall 2014 and Create course to help first-semester students who earn this semester GPA—in progress
 - Help with prerequisite checking for more departments—in progress
 - Revise 50 hour rule to 56—in progress
- **Enhance technology** to help students
 - Implement better advisor note-taking system and scheduler
 - Create Syllabus Library to help students choose courses—in progress
 - Make sure waitlists are fair and consistent across units, creating best practices-- in progress

College of Nursing

- **First Year Student Mentoring Program:** matches first-year student with a second-year student
- **Welcome into Nursing (WiN):** WiN aims to familiarize students with resources on campus that will facilitate a smooth transition to college.
- **Workshops:** (optional) Lunch and Learns for the first and second year CoN students on the topics of stress management and test anxiety.
- **Faculty Mentor Program:** All students are now assigned to an individual faculty mentor as well as a group of faculty that follow students across their entire enrollment in the College of Nursing.
- **College of Nursing Supplemental Instruction and NEST Program:** In an effort to increase the number of qualified under-represented students in our College of Nursing, a Supplemental Instruction program was developed. Challenging courses were identified, and current successful nursing students were hired by the College to lead supplemental instruction for the courses. This program has created not only the opportunity to master

the essential foundational courses, but created formal and informal mentoring relationships between enrolled nursing majors and nursing interest majors. In Fall 2012, the Nursing Educational Support Team (NEST) program was created to offer free drop in tutoring by current nursing majors to students enrolled in pre-requisite course work.

Tippie College of Business

- **Direct Admit Seminar program:** Students listen to large lecture presentations from Undergraduate Program Office staff on different majors and have the chance to meet Tippie faculty talk about majors and career opportunities. Discussion sections are taught by the Direct Admit students' assigned academic advisor.
- **Admit One Orientation program:** Standard Admission students must complete the Admit One professional development/orientation program the semester they are admitted to Tippie. As part of Admit One, students can attend major information sessions.
- **Four-year plans:** UPO academic advisors base their advice to students on a four-year plan, and review any study abroad plans a student may have in light of a four-year timeline. A four-year planning sheet is attached.
- **Major sheets** used for academic advising and student scheduling map out a four-year plan.
- **Required advising:** Tippie students are required to meet with their academic advisor once per semester for course scheduling until the time when they declare an academic major.
- **Required Resume:** Direct Admit students and Standard Admission students are both required to complete a resume reviewed by staff in Career Services – Direct Admit students in the Direct Admit seminar as part of their Career Day and Standard Admit students through the admission process.
- **Tippie Roadmap:** Undergraduate Program Office academic advisors are using the Tippie Roadmap, a skills and course inventory that assists' students in their academic planning (<http://tippie.uiowa.edu/undergraduate/roadmap/>)

College of Engineering

- **Performance Improvement Plans:** Meet individually with all students on probation during the first two weeks of the semester to develop individual Performance Improvement Plans and discuss expectations and consequences.
- **Professional Advising services**
 - Required advising appointments before each registration session to review progress and discuss future plans.
 - Contact students listed as not attending and all students with a low grade letter at midterm encouraging them to "act now" and talk to instructor and faculty advisor; send a more specific e-mail to those currently on probation and call those with more than one low grade notice.
 - Supplement the advising provided by the professional advisors through the development of a Peer Advising program consisting of senior engineering students representing each engineering major.
- **Career Advising.** Coordinate informal lunch and learn sessions by department faculty and corporate partners so students can informally gather information to best prepare for their individual career goals.
- **Peer Tutoring.** Provide free engineering core course peer-tutoring available 5 days a week in the evening
- **Required First-Year Seminar.** Require all first year students to complete seminar consisting of programs overview, success tips and professional development

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Academic Support

Academic Success Center: A coordinated offering of services and programs designed to help students reach their academic goals. Individual student academic coaching is provided along with the following programs:

- **Supplemental Instruction (SI)** provides free group study sessions for a broad range of courses identified as being historically challenging for students. SI sessions are facilitated by SI Leaders, who are undergraduate students who have previously taken the course and demonstrated academic competency in the subject area.
- **Tutoring Program** provides a centralized, one-stop-shop for students to receive academic support in a small group (2-4 students) tutoring session. While there is a nominal fee for tutoring (\$4/hr.), many programs across the university provide financial assistance for students who need tutoring.
- **Psychology 131: Academic Learning Skills** is a one-credit course that is designed to facilitate students' development of academic skills, behaviors, and attitudes. The course focuses on five domains associated with student academic success: goal setting and motivation, time management and planning, learning strategies and skills, campus environment, and campus relationships.

Writing and Media Center: The center offers tailored, one-on-one conferences for undergraduate students from all disciplines who are working on any form of written, oral, visual, or electronic communication.

Academic Planning

Soar in 4 Program is Iowa State University's four-year graduation plan program. Information about the program is shared with families and students as a part of the summer orientation program and in orientation courses in the academic year.

Four-Year Plans of Study are accessible to all (including current and prospective students) and are integrated into the on-line catalog system. These plans serve as valuable planning guides by providing semester-by-semester templates of courses to take in order to graduate in four years.

Academic Advising is a critical to assisting students in timely graduation. All undergraduate students are assigned academic advisers. Prior to registering for courses for an upcoming term, students meet with their academic advisers to develop course plans for student success and timely graduation. The university this year has invested in supporting academic advisers and their ability to serve students through the creation of an Academic Advising Innovation Grant program and the hiring of a new staff person to improve communication with advisers and increase adviser professional development.

Career Exploration Services (a division of Student Counseling Services) provides services to students who are undecided on their career or major, to facilitate their decision making process and help them get on track to graduation more quickly. Services provided include a career exploration library, individual career counseling sessions, career planning workshops, and U ST 104: Personal Career Development (a two-credit, full-semester course that takes a comprehensive approach to individual career choices and development)

Increase Transfer Credits Applied to Degrees: By reaching out to students who are taking college credits before they arrive at Iowa State, we can increase the likelihood that courses taken prior to enrolling at Iowa State will apply to the student's intended degree programs, thus reducing time to graduation and increasing four-year graduation rates. Specific initiatives in this area include:

- Increased communications with high school students (mailings, on-campus visit sessions, etc.) and high school counselors about how to most effectively use early college credit earned through Senior Year Plus.
- TRANSIT – the on-line degree audit tool that allows students to see how their courses apply to their intended degree.
- Admission Partnership Program provides and ISU academic advisor for students enrolled at an Iowa Community College
- Articulation Coordination Council brings together all academic colleges, enrollment services, and central administration to coordinate and encourage the development of articulation agreements, transfer plans, and faculty communications with Iowa's community colleges.

Course Availability Committee is a university-wide coordinated effort that brings together representatives from all academic colleges, enrollment services, student affairs, academic affairs, and facilities planning and management to proactively identify and managing anticipated course needs for the upcoming semesters. This team effort ensures that the courses students need to graduate in a timely fashion are available in the semesters needed.

Student Success Programs

Learning Communities are Iowa State University's hallmark first-year student success program, with over 70% of first-year students participating. Learning communities connect students with other students, peer mentors and faculty members. Residential and non-residential options are available for students. In addition to the first-year programs, learning communities are available for transfer students and students after the first-year.

MAPworks is a student survey-based program that identifies at-risk students allows students, advisers, program leaders to proactively address student needs for success. The survey is administered to all new direct from high school students early in their first fall semester.

Academic Probation and Warning Intervention is required for all students who have been placed on academic probation or warning. The student completes a self-assessment survey and meets with their academic adviser within the first two weeks of the semester. Students who do not meet with their adviser are restricted from register for courses for the following semester.

TRIO Student Support Services Program serves 250 low-income, first-generation students and/or students with disabilities each year with the goal of increasing persistence and graduation rates of these students.

2900 Project is a focused retention effort within Student Affairs to identify a web of support and the academic success of multicultural students who have not connected with any of the traditional support programs (e.g. Learning Communities, Carver Scholars Program, etc.).

Academic Program for Excellence is a university-wide, intensive eight-week summer bridge program for first-year multicultural students. The primary objective of APEX is to create an environment of high expectations coupled with the necessary support to prepare students for the rigors of academic life and the collegiate environment.

Financial Aid and a student's ability (or inability) to meet the financial obligations of college can impact four-year graduation rates. To address these issues, Student Financial Aid and the Accounts Receivables offices have developed increased outreach efforts and meetings with students receiving financial aid. In addition, to proactively address the cost of college education, the ISU Foundation's current fundraising efforts have a significant focus on student scholarships.

Student Success Council is a university-wide collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to leverage best practices and identify issues and opportunities to increase student success. The council also organizes an institutional Student Success Summit; the summit in April 2014 will focus on addressing the graduation rates of at-risk students.

Assessment and Research

The Enrollment Research Team has conducted extensive analysis of issues associated related to time to degree and identification of at-risk students. This research base has informed the development of a variety of programs including the 2900 project.

Institutional Task Forces in recent years have looked at the success and four-year graduation rate of students entering with growing student populations: 1) students entering with early college credit and 2) students who enter the institution undecided (Open Option). The implementation of recommendations from these task forces includes both programmatic and policy changes to improve student success.

Highlights of College/Department Initiatives

Across the institution, there are numerous college, department and programmatic initiatives in place focused on student retention, success and four-year graduation rates. The items shared below are representative of the efforts being undertaken within academic colleges, but are not inclusive of all efforts.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Departmental Help Rooms are provided for many of the core introductory departments/courses, including mathematics, chemistry, and physics.

Frontiers of the Discipline are optional courses that connect first-year students with faculty in a small seminar course on 'cutting-edge, interdisciplinary topics' within LAS.

The Mathematics Department has conducted extensive analysis of the Math 140-series courses that have historically had a high D/F/Withdraw rate. The department has changed pedagogy, implemented new versions of help rooms, refined placement recommendations through the use of ALEKS, and next year will implement new courses/curriculum that better meet the needs of students in various majors to address these concerns and result in decreases in the D/F/W rate.

College of Human Sciences

Connect Four is a recently implemented initiative within the college to provide co-curricular activities and academic support for multicultural students, connecting them in four-ways with peers, faculty, the college and their major.

Orientation courses cover the four-year plan templates and require students to complete their own individual long-range semester-by-semester plan.

Departmental tutoring is offered for many of our 100 and 200 subjects.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)

CALS has a number of retention and graduation enhancement initiatives active. They are based on the recommendations of a recent college level task force on the first-year experience. The four initiatives we decided to begin with follow:

1) Establish a common set of expectations for students

Research has shown that new students often find the expectations they had before enrolling at an institution are not what they experience once they enroll. This disconnect can lead to dissatisfaction sufficient to cause students to either leave or to impede their progress.

2) Develop first year seminar courses or transform our orientation courses into them

Research has shown that first year seminar courses can have a positive impact on student persistence and the student experience in general. Fortunately, CALS has a long history of requiring our new students to enroll in orientation courses their first semesters. At present, we have a group of our orientation instructors determining the differences and similarities of our orientation courses and the suggested content of first-year seminars. That group will make recommendations on how to adjust the orientation courses or whether completely different first-year seminar courses should be developed

3) Improve adviser training

Despite the fact that CALS students frequently rate the advising they receive the highest in the University, our First-year Task Force believed advising could be improved with improved adviser training. We currently have an active group looking to develop an online training module all new advisers must complete before being assigned advisees. That group will also be planning in-service advisor training for experienced advisers. The first of the in-service sessions will take place on October 23.

4) Continue college level communications with new students throughout their first year

It was observed that CALS has a well-established and effective communication plan for new students until they enroll. However, the communications cease once the students register for their first set of classes. The Task force recommended that we continue to communicate with students through their first year to assist them and remind them why they selected CALS and ISU. That recommendation resulted in a monthly newsletter that is being sent to all new CALS students beginning FY13.

College of Engineering

Financial Support for academic success programs: the college provides financial assistance to offer Supplemental Instruction for ENGR 160, tutoring for underrepresented populations (women, multicultural students), student organizations within the college, etc.

Strong commitment to learning communities: there are learning communities for all degree programs, special populations, transfer students, and second (and even third) year communities in some departments.

Multicultural Summer Bridge Program (APEXe): for entering engineering students the summer between high school graduation and their first fall semester, to ease their transition from high school to college.

Coordination with community colleges: to improve pre-engineering preparation to make a path to a 2+2 clear and develop courses available at the community colleges to allow students to better progress towards their degree.

Investment in additional academic advisors: as the college has grown in recent years, academic advisers have been added in departments across the college to allow students to continue to have the necessary one-on-one time with their academic adviser.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Introduction

Many of the following efforts have been in place for years, as a result of the University of Northern Iowa's commitment to the timely graduation of its students. UNI has long been recognized as a leader among its peers on this issue. Indeed, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities used UNI as one of the positive case studies in its 2004 report titled "Student Success in State Colleges and Universities". UNI continues to push for increased student success, however, and more of the items listed below are newer initiatives, instituted as the result of recommendations from the Retention Council, which was established in 2010.

The efforts are successful. The four-year graduation rate for students in the 2009 incoming class is 37.6%, up from 34.1% for the 2000 incoming class. The national average four-year graduation rate for public comprehensive universities is only about 20%. The first-year retention rate for UNI is 82.9%, which is the highest since 2007; the only other time it has been higher was 2000. It is also important to note that the average first-year retention rate for institutions comparable to UNI is just 71.7%.

Pre-Enrollment Initiatives for New Freshmen

ALEKS Math Placement Exam: ALEKS assists students in choosing the appropriate university-level math courses, and helps UNI advisors when they work with new students at initial registration.

Mandatory New-Student Orientation: This two-day program is designed to facilitate the successful transition of new students to UNI. Students learn about academic expectations and about university resources, and they begin to connect with the UNI community.

UNI GradPact: Students who sign up for this are assured of graduation within four years, provided s/he meets the plan's conditions and requirements.

Welcome Week: This is a community-building initiatives to connect new students to campus life, as well as to the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area.

First-Year Curricular Initiatives

First-Year Only Courses: All first-year students are registered in at least one course in the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) that is reserved for first-year students only. These courses all have a Peer Teaching Assistant (PTA), who is an upperclass student who mentors students in the course. These courses and the PTAs serve to facilitate connections between students and faculty, promote student learning, provide psychological and emotional support during the transition to college, and create leadership opportunities for upperclass students.

Cornerstone Course: This is a two-semester (6-credit) integrated communication course that satisfies both the writing and oral communication components of the LAC. All sections are reserved for first-year students. About 25 sections are offered. Each section has a PTA, and the year-long experience essentially functions as a learning community.

Peer Teaching Assistants: This program has upperclass students serve as mentors in first-year only classes. They facilitate connections between new students and faculty, and provide mentoring on engagement, positive student behavior, and student learning.

"Intake" Academic Advising: This effort is run by the Office of Academic Advising. All first year "deciding" students (those who have not declared a major) participate; departments may elect to have their first-year declared majors advised in the program. The program includes weekly emails, group meetings, individual appointments, and events focused on academic and transition needs of first-year students.

Supplemental Instruction: SI is an academic support model that uses peer leaders to provide support to students in traditionally challenging courses. Peer SI leaders hold collaborative study sessions and serve as models of active learning for those in their courses.

First-Year Co-Curricular Initiatives

Gaining Panther Success Mentoring: First-year multi-cultural students are mentored by upperclass multicultural students. This program creates a "rolling" system, so that mentees later have the opportunity to become mentors. This provides leadership opportunities for upperclass students, and keeps them connected to campus.

Living, Learning Communities: These were created around several broad academic and co-curricular areas, such as music, elementary/early childhood education, business, honors, or wellness. LLCs also exist for freshmen and transfer students. Another for students interested in biology will be created starting next academic year. Students live together in the residence halls and participate in programming, courses, and conversations with faculty.

Jump Start: This is a week-long extended orientation to facilitate the successful transition of underrepresented students to UNI. Jump Start connects them to a network of academic and personal support services and gets them involved in the university community right away.

MAP-Works: This is an early-warning system that allows the tracking of student progress through the academic year. Students are assigned a risk indicator based on survey responses and characteristics, after which early interventions by the university can begin.

Financial Literacy: All new students attend a financial literacy session during orientation, and are encouraged to sign up for one of several three-week "Live Like a Student" courses offered by the Office of Student Financial Aid. The successfulness of these efforts has led to decreases in average student indebtedness over the past two years.

Targeted Initiatives

Success Coaching: Students who have a first-semester GPA of less than 2.0 receive individualized outreach through this program. Students are individually mentored by faculty and staff volunteers from across campus. Students readmitted from suspension are also required to participate in this program.

Strategies for Academic Success: Students identified as at-risk at the point of admission are required (or in some cases, strongly encouraged) to enroll in a Strategies for Academic Success course. The course teaches students study skills, time management, and goal setting while reinforcing writing and other academic skills.

TRIO Student Support Services: This is a set of federally-funded programs to support low-income families, first generation college students, and students with disabilities. UNI is recognized as being on the forefront in providing TRIO services, and recently hosted the statewide TRIO leadership conference.

Financial Aid Advising: First generation students who apply to the university receive a phone call in the fall with information about filling out the FAFSA, another phone call in January with a reminder to complete the university scholarship application, and a follow-up later in the spring to explain students' financial aid awards.

LGBT Student Support: An annual Rainbow Reception early in the fall semester welcomes the LGBT to campus, and an open house for families of LGBT students is also held early in the fall. An LGBT Center has been established, and a graduate assistant in the Dean of Students office focuses on LGBT outreach.

Military and Veteran Students: A full-time Military and Veteran Student Services Coordinator works to serve those students. A Student Veterans Association has been established, along with new scholarship opportunities. Recognition of military and veteran students at graduation is done through red, white, and blue honor cords.

Academic Planning and Advising Initiatives

Plan of Study: All students have access to an electronic plan of study that maps out the course requirements for their major, including a recommended timetable for progressing through the program. It is customizable, so that a student and his/her advisor can make adjustments to the timetable depending on the student's needs.

Professional and Faculty Advising: The Office of Academic Advising is staffed by nationally-recognized and award-winning professional advisors. The office advises all "students in transition" (those still deciding on a major, or who are considering changing a major). Additionally, the Office provides Intake Advising (see above) as well as professional development for faculty advisors across campus. Professional advising also exists in the College of Business Administration and College of Education. Departments with large numbers of students, such as Biology and Psychology, use advising courses in addition to personal faculty advising. Faculty advising is rewarded through an annual award.

Academic Learning Center: This center houses tutoring services, the reading and writing centers, exam services and the TRIO programs. One-on-one tutoring is available in a wide variety of subjects, and personalized support can be had in the reading and writing centers. Exam Services offers test preparation to UNI students about to take standardized tests such as the GRE, LSAT, or the Praxis test for Teacher Education.

Operational and Policy Review

Class Scheduling: A new task force is being established to examine class scheduling practices and policy to ensure that the schedule of classes each semester can be built to avoid bottleneck in students' progress through their programs.

Change in Withdrawal Process: A student withdrawing from the university now fills out a form that gathers information about why the student is leaving UNI. Students withdrawing also meet with a staff member who helps them work through problems and concerns in an effort to keep the student from leaving.

Outreach to Non-Registered Students: Each semester, the Office of the Registrar now distributes to academic departments a list of students who are eligible to register for the next semester but have not yet done so. Department officials follow up with these students and offer assistance to aid in their registration.

November 2013